

Living

Politics, religion taboo subjects in all-male francophone preserve

By Margo Roston
Citizen staff writer

In a city that thrives on political gossip, a building on Dalhousie Street is an anomaly.

The Institut Francais-Canadien d'Ottawa may be one of the only places in the nation's capital where people can't talk politics.

Even former member Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier was banned from talking about his day at the office when he entered the club.

And while all club members must be Roman Catholic, religion is the other subject that can't be discussed within the club's walls.

The club's 133rd anniversary will be June 24. It was started fifteen years before Confederation by Balzora Turgeon, the first French-speaking mayor of Bytown.

It now boasts a membership of over 1,000 and a library of nearly 3,000 historical books.

Rules and regulations govern the conduct of all members of the private club. Men must remove their hats inside and most members have not yet come around to accepting women as members.

Women are admitted for mixed bridge on Thursday and Saturday evenings and for special receptions, but otherwise the oldest French-speaking private club in North America is restricted to men only.

Four fathers of Confederation, one bishop, one archbishop, one prime minister, and senior members of the court have at one time or other been members or honorary presidents.

Today's members come from all walks of life, but they must be able to speak French.

"We want to preserve our French here," said club treasurer Yvon Renaud who has been a member for 40 years. He said members only speak English when they are with English guests.

Members say they like to drop in to the market-area club for its friendly spirit and conviviality. During the day retired members come to play billiards and cards and after 4 p.m. things pick up as others drop by for a drink and a game.

"I meet all my friends at the club," added Renaud. "It's like a second home."

The three-storey building houses a games room, a snack bar and a main floor bar and social hall. The library, crammed with historical books, contains a collection presented by Emperor Napoleon 111 of France through his nephew.

The club began when five French pioneers opened a tiny reading room



Henri Laperrière in the club library



Familiar scene in the games room — men playing cards

over a fire station in Lowertown, the idea being to read newspapers to illiterate francophones so they would be informed of the days' events.

The club moved several times and grew larger over the years. It now accepts nearly 50 new members each year. But club members say at least 25 members die annually.

Henri Laperrière, the 79-year-old cultural director and a former agriculture and sports editor at *Le Droit*, says the only time women tried to break down the all-male barrier at the club was when a group of young *Le Droit* reporters suggested they should be allowed to become members.

Variety of opportunities available to volunteers for bilingual service

Lend a Hand

Volunteering is a great "after hours" activity that can help your career. By taking an active part in community affairs, you can increase and enhance your visibility.

Why not ask informative, bilingual interviewers at the Central Volunteer Bureau, 232-4876, and get some suggestions for volunteer activity?

Match and Share:
This bilingual pilot program helps seniors with accommodation. Mature and discreet volunteers are needed to conduct interviews of home providers and accommodation seekers. Also required are volunteers to answer the phone and type in a central location.

Variety of jobs:
Is your interest in international development keen enough to become active in a well-known national organization?

Volunteers are sought for a number of positions to either work in office, at home or at place of special event. There will be individual training and ongoing support.

Typing:
A very basic and necessary job to so many organizations is typing and other clerical work. Current requests include taking minutes

at a monthly evening meeting, staffing a library in late afternoon, newsletter editing and mailing for a peace organization, plus others.

Senior Residence:
Reach out and befriend a lonely senior resident. No experience is necessary. Several homes in the area could use you as a friendly visitor. An east end residence also needs help in their coffee shop.

Mouse cells rejuvenated

The Chicago Tribune

It is not quite a fountain of youth, but researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have found a way of changing aged mouse cells back into young cells.

By reducing the level of sphingomyelin and increasing the amount of lecithin — two important constituents of cell membranes — they found that 14-day-old heart cells perked up and behaved more like 4-day-old cells, said doctors Y. Barenholz and E. Yechiel.



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Today's child

Judith Adams

Affectionate boy, 5, fighting handicap

Jeffrey is an appealing, active little boy who is five-years-old.



Jeffrey, 5

His development is somewhat slow due to the medical condition with which he was born called Prader Willi Syndrome.

But he's showing an ability to learn and retain what he has learned, and every milestone he meets is an exciting achievement for Jeffrey and for everyone who works with him.

He's a most affectionate little fellow and full of surprises, for he has a good sense of humor and twinkle in his eye. Recently when we visited the zoo together, he gave a mother sheep a big spontaneous kiss. And when he was allowed to feed the miniature horses a carrot, he first took a big bite of it himself.

It's vital to control his eating and keep his weight down for the sake of his overall health, for people with Prader Willi Syndrome who don't curb their appetites become very obese and unhealthy, very quickly.

It is only recently that Jeffrey's kind of health problem has been recognized and dealt with for what it is. Parents of children

with Prader Willi Syndrome have formed a group in Toronto and in addition to offering support to each other now, they hope they can find the resources to set up a semi-independent living situation for children like Jeffrey once he is an adult.

Jeffrey goes into junior kindergarten this coming year in a regular public school, but in the future he may need a special education program.

If you think you may be the family for this delightful little boy, and can provide him with the patient, consistent nurturing he needs, please write to Today's Child, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Box 888, Station K, Toronto, Ont.

Describe your present family and your interests as fully as possible in your letter, and include your telephone number.

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